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C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 000166

SIPDIS

STATE ALSO FOR SCA, EUR AND EAP
NSC FOR GEN. JONES

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TAGS: PREL PARM MARR AS

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN POLICY REVIEW: AUSTRALIA ON BOARD

REF: A. CANBERRA 156
¶B. STATE 14097

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Daniel A. Clune. Reasons: 1.4 (b)(d).

¶1. (C) Following his February 17 call on PM Senior Advisor Quinlan to solicit input into the U.S. Afghanistan-Pakistan policy review (reflets), Charge delivered the same demarche February 18 to National Security Adviser (NSA) Duncan Lewis, who is coordinating the GOA's own policy review. Lewis welcomed the offer and told the Charge U.S. NSA Gen. Jones had mentioned the review during a conversation two weeks earlier and had asked for Australia's input at the time. Australia was keen to have an input in the process, he asserted, adding the GOA could produce its suggestions in a matter of days. Australian Ambassador to Washington Dennis Richardson had promised a paper that would feed into the process. Lewis said he hoped there might be an opportunity to orally present Australia's ideas in Washington as well.

¶2. (C) That afternoon, on Lewis' instruction, Hugh Borrowman, First Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, telephoned the Charge to convey Australia's formal acceptance of the invitation to contribute to the U.S. review. Lewis was immediately convening a high-level working group to work on it, he said.

¶3. (C) During the Charge's office call, NSA Lewis had touched briefly on two other topics: he asked the Charge to relay the Government of Australia's sincere thanks for American assistance with the bushfire emergency in Victoria; and he once again raised PM Rudd's "anxiety" over the NATO Summit, reiterating Rudd was "hard over" in insisting there must be an opportunity for leaders from all ISAF countries to discuss Afghanistan at the Strasbourg meeting.

¶4. (SBU) Separately, POLCOUNS shared the points with Deborah Stokes, First Assistant Secretary for South and West Asia, Middle East and Africa, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who was aware of our earlier demarches. She echoed sentiments of Quinlan and Lewis in welcoming an opportunity for Australia to provide its perspective on the policy review. She acknowledged the tight timeline and said that the GOA would strive for a fast turnaround on its response.

CLUNE